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Food and Home Notes

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Braising means to cook by steam trapped and held in a covered container or foil wrap. The source of steam may be water or other liquid added to the meat — or, it may be meat juice alone, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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Pot roasting is braising large cuts of meat, either on top of a range or in an oven — but roasting is a method in which the meat is surrounded and cooked by heated air, usually in an oven. Meat is not covered and no water is added.

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Broiling means cooking meat on one side at a time by direct heat from a flame, electric unit, or glowing coals.

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Pan broiling means cooking in an uncovered pan over direct heat. Fat that cooks out of the meat is drained off as it accumulates.

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If you're "simmering" meat you keep the liquid just below boiling.

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ON FAMILY LIVING

... "AND ADULT SITTERS"

If you've never heard of "adult sitters" you've missed something new in the way of coping with family-life situations. It's a natural plan — mature people help, and are helped by each other. The idea was developed by organizing an "Adult Sitters' Clinic" in Kingsville, Texas, where the extension agents saw a need and responded with a plan to train adults to serve as "sitters" and provide limited health aid.

The project is twofold: it provides senior citizens with an opportunity to serve their community while adding to their own limited incomes and it provides help for bedridden patients, persons recovering from illness or injury, and the physically, and mentally, handicapped.

It is hoped that the program will enable many older adults to remain in their own homes, rather than having to move to nursing homes or other institutions. The "Adult Sitters' Clinic" provides basic health care training for those who serve as "sitters" with other adults who are in need. It's a plan that could work in any community... where people care.

ABOUT THE HOME FREEZER

LOCATION is important...if you locate it in, or near, the kitchen, you'll use it more often. Check to see that it is placed away from a back wall so there's adequate air circulation. Lack of air or dust buildup can overheat the motor and add to the operational costs.

OPERATING COSTS per pound of food are less if the freezer is kept at least three-fourths full at all times. Keeping a frozen food longer than 8-10 months is not economical—food needs to be used on a rotating basis. Frequent opening of the freezer door increases the cost of operation.

High electric rates, poorly operating freezers, or inefficient use of freezer space or materials will all add to the cost. In some cases, home freezing adds up to 53¢ a pound, to the cost of food, according to studies made by Extension Nutritionists at Cornell University.

Annual Cost of Freezing and Storing Food in a 15-Cubic Foot Freezer

EXPENSE	POUNDS OF FOOD STORED	
	525	1312
Overhead	\$ 80.26 to \$247.63	\$ 80.26 to \$247.63
Cost to store pre-packaged, frozen food (overhead divided by the number of pounds stored)	\$.15 to \$.47	\$.06 to \$.18
Packaging (at .05 per pound)	\$ 26.25	\$ 65.60
Electricity to freeze food (at 0.1 KWH per pound, ranging from .03 to .09 per KWH)	\$ 1.58 to \$ 4.73	\$ 3.94 to \$ 11.81
Total annual cost	\$108.09 to \$278.61	\$149.80 to \$325.04
Total cost per pound to package, freeze and store food	\$.20 to \$.53	\$.11 to \$.25

There may be additional costs in operating a freezer. Opening the doors often, keeping the freezer in a warm place, or power cutbacks will increase the electrical costs. Excessive or wasteful use of packaging materials is costly, as many of these materials cost two cents or more per square foot. Insurance for repairs on food spoilage may also add to the cost.



food then and now

THE USE OF FROZEN FOOD

— AND HOW TO MAKE YOUR FREEZER "PAY"

Frozen foods have been with us a long time — from the old ice-salt systems used to freeze food back in the mid-1800's to the frozen "boil in a bag" convenience foods of today. There were patents for freezing fish granted in England in 1842 and in this country as far back as 1861. Quick freezing processes and equipment development began in the 1920's but frozen foods for home use did not become important until 1940. From "then 'til now" however, more than a 10 billion pound per year freezing industry has developed in this country with a volume exceeded only by canning.

Today, the frozen food locker, the homefreezer, and even the freezing-it-yourself methods have become common-place to the homemaker. Whatever type of frozen storage you use — you should "make it pay". Consumers need to know some of the basic principles about freezing food, according to Dr. Evelyn Johnson of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service.

What is freezing? It's subjecting food in vapor, moisture-proof packages to the coldest practical temperature possible — 20 degrees F or below, and stored at 0 F. Freezing merely stops or slows the growth of organisms that cause spoilage, (until the frozen food is thawed) it does not kill the organisms (as in the canning process). DID YOU KNOW — Any food that can be canned, can be frozen. Some things that may seem questionable to can, freeze well. Examples are: vegetable mixtures for which you do not have canning instructions; and seafood, bananas (may be mashed or blended), table-ready dishes (casseroles), meal leftovers in individual portions as well as

THE USE OF FROZEN FOOD (CON'T)

home-prepared convenience foods and baby foods.

All cheeses can be frozen but changes may occur in texture. Cheddar cheese may crumble, but pimento cheese mixture freezes well. Frozen milk will keep up to 4 months without losing nutritive value. Freezing does alter taste and appearance. Food that has thawed can be refrozen if thawed in the refrigerator; contains ice crystals or was thawed properly, cooked and immediately refrozen.

Frozen vegetables and meats that turn white or brown on the surface are not necessarily spoiled. Exposure to oxygen in air turns meat darker and freezer-burns (dries out) exposed surfaces. This is due to poor packaging or punctures by meat bones or in routine handling.

ON PACKAGING FOR FREEZER

Read the manufacturer's label's when shopping for freezer materials. If purchasing freezer containers make sure the seal or lid will fit tight. It needs to be airtight, leakproof, odorproof, moisture proof, and vaporproof for highest quality food.

Remember that liquids and wet packs require 1/2 inch head space in half-pints and pints and 3/4ths inch in 1-1/2 pints. It's important, always to remember head space is necessary in your container...freezing is liquid expansion, so allow room.

If you freeze food in milk and cheese cartons, regular weight aluminum foil quality may remain good for a short time, but best packaging keeps best quality.

For best use of your freezer it is important to shape packages to fit the available space. Foil wrap in convenient shape to pack...loose pecans in bags will freeze and pack to conform to shapes needed for fitting into freezer area. If you make the most of your freezer, you can make it pay. If you have questions concerning freezing, contact the Extension Home Economists in your county.

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